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WARSAW REVITALIZATION PROJECT

Heart of Virginia's Northern Neck

Joseph N. Quesenberry – *Warsaw Town Manager*

Joseph N. Quesenberry was appointed to the role of Warsaw's Town Manager in November of 2016. Serving prior roles at Patrick County, Richmond County, and for the Virginia Municipal League and Virginia House of Delegates, Quesenberry brings a broad range of knowledge and skills to Warsaw. He is a 2013 graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University, where he graduated with Honors from the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs. Quesenberry also serves on the Warsaw - Richmond County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Warsaw Rotary Club, and is an officer of the Phi Kappa Psi Central Virginia Alumni Association. During his tenure, Warsaw has undergone a major revitalization and was selected as the winner of the Virginia Municipal League's 2019 Innovation Award for Economic Development.



Jerry W. Davis, AICP – *NNPDC Executive Director*

Jerry W. Davis has served 44 years in local and regional government in Virginia, including 14 years as a City or Town Manager and the last 24 as the Executive Director for the Northern Neck Planning District Commission. He has extensive experience in economic and community development, including project and grant management. He graduated with a B.A. in English from James Madison University and M.S. in Public Administration from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. He is certified by the American Planning Association's American Institute of Certified Planners.



Alex Eguiguren – *NNPDC Project Manager*

Alex Eguiguren has 19 years of experience in economic development with the Northern Neck Planning District Commission, and 31 years of experience as a writer and editor. He graduated with a B.S. in Business Administration/Marketing from the University of Texas at Dallas in 1984.



THE PROCESS



IDENTIFY THE NEED



CONSTRUCTION BEGINS



CREATE A PLAN



OTHER TOWN PROJECTS & GRANTS



REDESIGN YOUR DOWNTOWN



PROJECT IS FINISHED – LESSONS LEARNED

IDENTIFYING THE NEED

- In 2015-2016, several citizens and organizations came together to request that the Warsaw Town Council proceed with a plan to revitalize downtown Warsaw.
- With barely a handful of active businesses, buildings in decay, staff changes within the Town Office, and no real end in sight, the Warsaw Richmond County Main Street Program partnered with the Northern Neck Planning District Commission on a planning grant.
- With new Town staff members hired by Council and a renewed sense of hope, the Town, Main Street Program, Planning District Commission, and Chamber of Commerce all partnered together to proceed with a planning grant application.



INPUT IS VITAL

- The Town hosted a series of public forums to solicit input from business owners and residents for what they'd like to see.
- Business owners expressed their interest in utilizing façade grant money, a critical component of a successful project.
- Residents stated that more businesses, better walkability, and more things to do were of paramount importance for an improved quality of life.



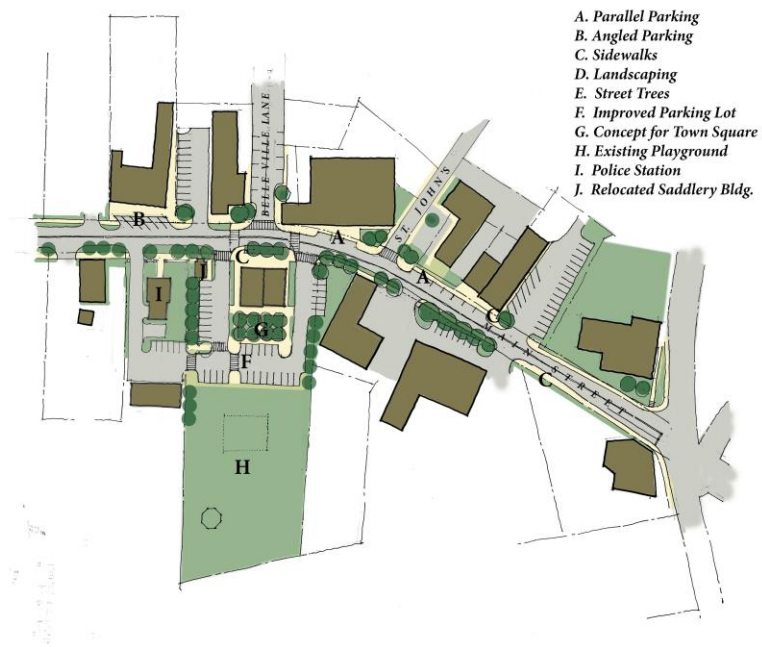
A blue-tinted photograph of a brick sidewalk leading towards trees and a road with signs. The sidewalk is made of reddish-brown bricks and leads from the foreground into the distance. On the left side of the sidewalk, there are trees and some greenery. On the right side, there is a concrete curb and some plants. In the background, a road with traffic signs is visible. The overall scene is dimly lit, suggesting dusk or dawn.

CREATING A PLAN

MOVING TOWARDS SUCCESS

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING & DESIGN

DOWNTOWN REIMAGINED



REVITALIZATION PLAN

Through the efforts of many, the Town was awarded a \$35,000 Planning Grant to create the following:

- Economic Restructuring Plan
- Marketing Plan
- Revitalization Plan
- Façade Improvement Plan

Community Futures and PMA Architecture were contracted to provide the plan and assist with hosting community forums.

Through the planning process, the Town was able to identify to DHCD why a revitalization project was needed while also identifying community goals and how to achieve them.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Warsaw Streetscape Rendering Takes Shape

- Robin Schicke of RMS Design was chosen as the architect to complete the façade renderings throughout downtown. Utilizing comments from both business owners and Town officials, Ms. Schicke created the rendering you see below.
- Incorporating historical images of Warsaw and local opinions, downtown facades provided a splash of color and character in what used to be a monochromatic setting.
- Although most business owners did utilize the façade renderings, some owners deviated from the design, with the approval of the façade committee, something we'll discuss later in the presentation.

Downtown Warsaw Revitalization Project - Facade Improvement Program - Warsaw, Virginia



Main Street East Side - North to South ->

<- South to North - Main Street East Side



Main Street West Side - South to North ->

<- North to South - Main Street West Side



Construction Begins

- The Town of Warsaw applied for and was subsequently awarded a \$1,000,000 competitive CDBG Business District Revitalization Grant for downtown revitalization work and storm water improvements.
- The Town established a façade committee and revolving loan committee to make decisions regarding each application for grant assistance.
- Each project was bid out or work was done by the owner of the building. For Warsaw's revitalization, most of the building owners chose to do their own work to the buildings in order to maximize grant funding for materials.

- In tandem with this, the Town Council began a major capital improvement campaign to replace aging concrete sidewalks with brick sidewalks, install landscaping throughout downtown, new water lines, and install banners and overhead signage. These were funded directly from the Town's coffers.
- Portions of the DHCD grant assisted in funding a new fountain, creating a downtown focal point, decorative acorn lighting, crosswalks, parallel parking, wayfinding signage, and much more.
- Through a combination of state and local investments, Warsaw's downtown went through a paradigm shift in both appearance and business activity.



TOWN FUNDED PROJECTS

Infrastructure & Development

- \$400,000 – Sidewalks, landscaping, signage, lighting, park and dog park improvements, parking improvements, etc.
- \$1,400,000 – Acquisition and demolition of an abandoned shopping center and installation of a stormwater pond and park of 11.65 acres (*\$618,000 DEQ Grant / \$200,000 NFWF Grant*).
- \$200,000 - Additional Town funds to assist DHCD funds in installing a new downtown stormwater network.

Economic Development & Growth

- \$366,000 of Forgivable Loans for business growth and expansion.
- 200 new jobs overall – 55 new jobs in downtown alone (*combination of Town & DHCD*).
- Rent assistance to a multitude of new businesses.
- 12 new businesses added to downtown in just 2 years, with only 1 overall loss due to COVID-19.
- Winner of the 2019 VML Innovation Award for Economic Development.
- Several new projects underway or recently completed throughout Town.



OTHER GRANTS

With being a small locality, we understood that in order to maximize our revitalization potential, we needed to leverage grant funds against other grants.

Many grants require an in-kind funding match which can often be accomplished by using another grant's funds.

Other grants that the Town was awarded during this project are:

\$1,400,000 – VDOT Sidewalk Improvement TAP Grant

\$618,000 – DEQ SLAF Grant

\$468,000 – DHCD IRF Grant

\$200,000 – National Fish & Wildlife Grant

\$50,000 – AFID Grant

These grants do not include several smaller grants that have been awarded, along with other incentives offered by the Enterprise Zone.

MAKING THE MOST OF IT



- As most City/Town/County leaders can agree, particularly those of us serving in rural communities, grants such as the DHCD Downtown Revitalization Grant do not come along very often.
- We knew that we needed to capture the momentum that we had and maximize it to the best of our abilities.
- Receiving the additional grant funds assisted us with a Town-wide revitalization effort, addressing not only downtown, but other areas of Town.
- With new businesses, beautification elements, a new stormwater system and green infrastructure, new sidewalks, and an overall positive change around Town, we feel that we have built a strong foundation for the future.

PROJECT IS FINISHED!

With new businesses lined up to open shop, a growing number of tourists and regional visitors, and a renewed sense of hope, the Town of Warsaw can close the book on the DHCD Downtown Revitalization Project. We look forward to starting a new one of growth and prosperity, largely due to funding by DHCD and the efforts of many community players and activists.



NOW, TIME FOR MORE PHOTOS!



ONE LAST COMPARISON...

Before



After



LESSONS LEARNED & WORDS OF WISDOM

1. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Without assistance from the NNPDC, we would not have been able to take on such a large revitalization project. Their knowledge, expertise, capacity, and willingness to see this project succeed and come to fruition are key factors in Warsaw having such a successful project.

2. Incorporate your local organizations.

Without adding the Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Program, Rotary Program, Friends of the Rappahannock, and many others, we would have missed out on many opportunities and different viewpoints. Having that buy-in factor makes the project much more enjoyable in the end.

3. Don't give up.

There were points at the beginning of the project where both Town and DHCD staff members thought this project may have been dead on arrival. Staff turnovers and a low morale were close to closing this project before it even began. We dusted ourselves off and were tenacious in pursuing our goals that we are fortunate enough to have met and surpassed.

4. Listen to DHCD, even when it's tough.

We get it – with less than 2,000 residents and a dedicated staff of 2 on this project, it's sometimes difficult to listen and or meet guidelines and requests by DHCD. Just remember that it's always in the best interest of the project and try to do your best to meet whatever goals they ask of you.

5. Get your audit completed ASAP.

Being a small locality, we tend to get passed over for our annual audit until most others have been completed. If you remember hearing discussions during DHCD workshops about having your audit in on time, do not pass this over. It will come back to bite you. Without a recent audit, we were unable to apply for reimbursement requests. Don't be afraid to get tough with your auditing firm to get the job done on time.

6. Be ready to have skin in the game.

This is perhaps one of the most important lessons that we learned throughout the process. Although a downtown revitalization grant is a huge catalyst for downtown redevelopment, it also takes a strong-handed approach to capital investments in and around the project area to make the project go from good to great. Be prepared and plan for this in advance.



QUESTIONS?

TOWN STAFF, NNPDC, DHCD



THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!